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<p>Tiivistelmä-Referat-Abstract</p> <p>Human rights discourse is one of the transnational languages, which may be used to approach migration. This study aims at scetching the ways how abstract human rights articulations, such as the convention drafted in the United Nations for the protection of the human rights of migrants and their families, are made meaningful in a particular context. The context of this study is the Portuguese society, and the distinct but overlapping relationship between the Church and the state. The convention protecting the human rights of migrants has not been ratified in any of the European countries so far, which the Catholic Church considers as a departure from the universality inherent to human rights. This study considers the way the Church aims at addressing its transnational audience and at criticizing the national and regional spheres through a common concept to both human rights and Catholicism, the universal human family. Human rights become meaningful to the Catholic actors through the concept of family, and the convention on the human rights of migrants is interpreted as a countermovement to the emphasis on individualism, characteristic to the human rights system; thus supporting the Catholic conceptualization about the foundation of the well-being of both the individual and the society.</p> <p>This study has relied on media sources to scetch the main features of the Portuguese discourse on migration and the particular situations in which human rights discourse is used. The homilies of Portuguese Bishops have provided the central concepts through which the relationship between human rights, religion, and the state are discussed. A concrete example of the way how the Catholic actors unite human rights claims with religious rhetoric is a concern over the human rights of migrants brought forward by Bishop Januário Torgal Ferreira during the pilgrimage of Fátima. The transformative power of a pilgrimage thus supports the human rights claims. The cult of Fátima, which holds a strong nationalist tradition due to the legacy of the dictatorship, is now a stage for transnational and modern ideas.</p> <p>The central observation of this study is that human rights discourse functions as a definer of the relationship between the Church and the state, because it is associated with Catholic humanism which aims at balancing the secular politics of the state. In the modern society this relationship is often perceived as distinct, because the interference of the supernatural in the politics of the secular state is not wanted. However, in the Portuguese society the Church has been consitutive to the history of the nation-state, and the so-called secularization process has not pushed it aside from the hegemonic position that it enjoys in the Portuguese society. This study traces the reasons which enable the religious to enter the public sphere of the modern society, and contribute to the construction of the intermediary role of the Catholic actors.</p>			
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